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SNOWFLAKE WHITE DELPHINIUMS, FIFTEEN MONTHS FROM SEED

# "WHEELER CROFT"

*Delphiniums, Japanese Iris, Violas*

**AGNES A. WHEELER**, Plant Breeder • 1939

6123 S. E. 18th Avenue, **PORTLAND, OREGON**



# WHEELER CROFT

**I**NTO these Delphiniums have gone eighteen years of patient work, of waiting, of hopes, of dreams. Years of selection and cross pollination by hand. Years of study of the laws of inheritance. Back of these were the long years of study of biology and botany, of the exacting methods of science.

The Wrexhams, the Hoodacres, the Blackmore and Langdon strains, the Lyon-dels, went into these Delphiniums. Years of selection and crosses by hand has brought a strain—the Wheeler Croft—that has certain characteristics of its own: It has great vigor of growth with many spikes of stiff wiry stalks that are not easily broken. Some grow around four feet and others seven and nine feet in height. The flower spikes are from two feet to fifty-eight inches of bloom, carrying laterals from twenty-four to forty-three inches long, with as many as twenty to a stalk. The flowers are from two and a half to three and a half inches across. They are evenly placed on the stalk so that each has its own space, making a solid spike that is not crowded or bunchy anywhere. The flowers open all at one time or nearly so and open flat, with the centers set therein like jewels. The individual stems average between two and seven inches in length at the base of the spike.

The laterals are a great asset. They greatly prolong the blooming season and make the loveliest and most graceful sprays for cut flowers. The flowers are almost as large as those on the main spike.

And the colors: **Summer Sky, Pastel, Crater Lake Blue, Blue Lake, Sunrise, Violet, Cornflower Blue, Venetian Nights, Desert Twilight, Painter's Dream, Royal Purple, Claret, and Burgundy.**

**A NEW STRAIN of WHITE DELPHINIUMS — THE SNOWFLAKE STRAIN** — white and pure like their name, with flowers two and a quarter inches to three and one-half inches across. Sturdy growth, spikes twenty-four to forty-three inches long, with long graceful laterals. This strain is the result of years of Hand Pollination, of the most rigid selection. In my garden, out of one hundred and fifty plants from **WHEELER CROFT HAND POLLINATED WHITE SEED** there were only seven blue ones, that were all very light blue. This crop of flowers was crossed by hand to bring you and me bigger and better ones than these. It has steadily improved through the years. It is now one of the best obtainable.

**SNOWFLAKE.** A short spike not over two feet long, with laterals around fifteen inches. But the flowers are three and one-half inches, snow white, with a cream center, very double. They are of sturdy growth and medium height. The most beautiful white delphiniums that I have ever seen. **\$2.50 per pkt.**

**SNOW PRINCESS.** Daughter of Snowflake by Snow Queen. Very strong, sturdy growth, large perfect double white blooms, cream center, good placement; very long fine laterals. Height about five feet. **\$2.50 per pkt.**

**WHITE STAR.** This grows tall, with very long laterals. It has a long, loose spike with three inch flowers of the double anemone type. Light cream



# T DELPHINIUMS

center. Beautiful, graceful, numerous laterals. Pure glistening white. Strong growth. This was crossed with Snowflake to give very choice seed. **\$2.50 per pkt.**

**WHITE SPIRE.** Three foot spike of double white flowers. Snow white on a well developed spike. Flowers over two and a half inches. Three foot laterals. Fawn center. Crossed with White Star and Snowflake. **Seed only. \$2.50 per pkt.**

**SNOW QUEEN.** Forty-three-inch spike of very perfect snow white flowers, double, with cream centers. Flowers over three inches, with individual stems of six inches at the base of the spike. Very strong growth, tall, around seven feet. Anemone type of flowers. Crossed with Snowflake for greater beauty. **Seed only. \$2.50 per pkt.**

**BLACK-EYED BRIDE.** Pure white flowers with a beautiful black center. Graceful spikes with numerous laterals. Seven to nine stalks to a plant. Perfect placement of two and three-quarter inch flowers. Crossed with others of the black-eyed type for improvement. **Seed only. \$2.50 per pkt.**

**Packet \$2.50; 5 trial packets, one of each white variety, \$5.00.**

**Snowflake Seedlings, \$5.00 per dozen.**

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**PINK DELIGHT. NEW SHADE.** Distinct, self color. Delicate pink with the faintest undertone of mauve. There is no trace of blue in the 3½ inch flowers, with their pale fawn centers. Spike between two and three feet, wide at the base, tapering. Vigorous sturdy plants, around five feet high. Long, numerous laterals. There is now a series of these, representing a new color range in delphiniums. **Seed, \$5.00 per pkt.**



**PINK DELIGHT**



# WHEELER CROFT HYB

## HAND POLL

### *Collection of 12 Mixed*

Seed, \$2.00 per pkt. Trial packets, \$1.00.

Collection of 12 pkts., valued \$24, for \$20.00.

Plants of named hybrids are not for sale, except a few varieties in very limited quantities. **SIX** plants, my selection, labeled varieties, \$10.00; **TWELVE** plants, \$20.00. No smaller orders will be accepted.

**BLUE LAKE.** Vivid blue, bright as cobalt, double, large flowered. Very striking. Lovely and charming.

**BURGUNDY.** This is the dull rich wine color of burgundy. Dark and handsome, giving a solid color effect that takes the eye of any spectator. The stalks are stiff and tall; it is of excellent constitution, with flower spikes of four feet and over, flowers of three inches and over, with almost perfect placement. It has fine, numerous laterals and the seed carry a high percentage true to type and color.

**CLARET.** Light wine purple, very clear, rather cold and sparkling. Flowers very large, around 3½ inches, and is running quite true to type and color.

**CORNFLOWER BLUE.** Cornflower blue double with petals that open very flat, with the edges turning back a little. Long spikes with long lovely laterals. Very little orchid now in this class and it is greatly improved. Flowers 3 inches and over. Vigorous.

**CRATER LAKE BLUE.** This is the most vivid and loveliest shade of blue—the blue of Crater Lake at sunset. A white center and a tone of velvet upon the petals. Flowers around 2½ inches. Greatly improved.

**DESERT TWILIGHT.** Double, with dark centers only. It gives a solid effect of the most delicate mauve. It fades and glows and charms. Flowers 3-3½ inches, very long spikes, perfect placement. One of the most beautiful Wheeler Croft delphiniums.

**PAINTER'S DREAM.** This one is most distinctive and is now greatly improved, with





# ORCHID DELPHINIUM SEED PLANTS ONLY

*Seedling Plants, \$2.50*

large flowers, long spikes, fine laterals, and much stronger growth. It has a tan center and is an almost indescribable blending of soft deep blue tones, with faint touches of mauve. The 1938 crop ran about forty per cent true.

**PASTEL PINK.** Cousin to Pink Delight but with much more orchid. Extra large flowers, rather short, strong spike, mostly light centered, double, and distinctive. It comes very true from seed. The growth is usually around five feet and seldom needs staking.

**ROYAL PURPLE.** This is one of my most beautiful delphiniums, running fifty to seventy per cent true in the 1938 crop. Spikes around four feet, wide at the bottom, and tapering to a spire. They come in both light and dark centers, with almost perfect placement, long pedicels, with large, flat, widely opened flowers. Very double. A startling color. A stalk may have as many as twenty laterals, with flowers almost as large as those on the main spike. Vigorous growth with four to seven spikes per plant. Flowers from 3-3½ inches. Clear, bright royal purple, one of the richest and most gorgeous colors in delphiniums.

**SUMMER SKY.** A clear azure blue double, the blue of the summer sky. Sparkling, beautiful, enchanting. White or fawn centers. Flowers around 2½ inches but of a charming perfection. Tough stems.

**SUNRISE.** Double, blushing mauve upon azure back petals, long spikes, over four feet, 3 inch flowers, many laterals. Centers are light or dark gold, or fawn, widely opened, flat flowers. It is fascinating but does not fix easily in the seed, but does occur.

**VENETIAN NIGHTS.** A deep brilliant blue, dark and lovely; sparkling white center. Double with only a little mauve. Very greatly improved and shows a much higher percentage true from the seed. The 1938 crop brought some very fine ones and the 1939 crop will be much better.





# VIOLAS



MAGGIE MOTT

**VIOLAS.** One of the loveliest perennials. Easily grown, requiring little care, unregardful of frequent moving, blooming joyously and exuberantly from six to eight months of the year, these are among the loveliest flowers that can be grown in your gardens.

Violas are perfectly adapted for ground covers around lilies or any other tall perennial that has little foliage near the ground.

They are lovely in beds by themselves, in masses of one color; and in the hardy border, in front of the taller growing plants. They make a mass of one color that is a joy and a relief that one can have an ever-blooming flower that is so little trouble.

They make the most beautiful edgings along paths and around beds. During the season, I can look out of my window and see the wide ribbon of violet purple that my Jersey Jewel makes around my beds of Japanese Iris. Not the least of my joy is that it will be there until the heavy frost of fall. I have only to water them occasionally, pick them now and then, and enjoy them. Put on a two inch mulch of peat moss in July to keep the roots cool and moist during the hot season and to protect them during the winter. The old growth should be cut back at the end of the first blooming season, usually in July, giving the new growth at the center a chance. It is the new growth which continues the bloom. They like a deep rich soil, bone meal, sheep guano, leaf mold, rotted cow manure, or any good fertilizer that is not too strong. They like sun but need a mulch to keep them from drying out too fast. Light shade is very satisfactory and some growers always recommend it.



◀ ◀ *On all Viola plants, no mail orders filled for less than \$1.00* ▶ ▶

**ENCHANTRESS.** Very long stemmed flowers of deep velvety violet. A Canadian child, with a most excellent root system; a good grower and an easy propagator. The flowers have the same perky shape as the Jersey Gem; the flower is larger, and the color richer and deeper. **Each 50c; \$5.00 per doz.**

**MAGGIE MOTT.** Flowers over two inches across, of a most lovely shaded violet that is very uncommon. Beautiful cut-flower, with long stems, and the most persistent prize winner at flower shows. It combines well with all colors, is a generous bloomer and has a persistent appeal not equalled by any other variety that I have ever grown. Good strong stock. Fine bedding viola and most charming in mass effect. **Each 35c, \$3.00 per dozen.**

**JERSEY GEM.** A most satisfactory viola. Large flowers of a pure violet, slightly perfumed, on long stems, from early spring to late fall. Lovely cut flower. **Each 25c, \$2.00 per dozen.**

**WHEELER CROFT No. 1.** One of my originations. Larger and bluer than the Jersey Jewel, it is of low, spreading, compact growth, very well adapted for banks and rock gardens. It likes sun and blooms earlier and later than most violas. Very hardy. **Each 35c, \$4.00 per dozen.**

**WHEELER CROFT No. 3.** This is a seedling that came from a cross that I made between a white viola and the Jersey Gem. It is a lovely grey blue, larger than the Jersey Gem but not so long stemmed. It's growth

is just the same, compact and every shoot rooted. It will grow very well in full sun but the color holds better in light shade. It blooms early, consistently, and late. So far, it has seeded so little that I have not been able to test them. All plants from cuttings and root divisions. **Each 50c, \$5.00 per dozen.** Stock of both originations limited.

**WHEELER CROFT WHITE.** Milk white, it is a most generous and almost continuous bloomer. The jaunty, dainty flowers are carried on long stiff stems, 7 to 9 inches in length. With some foliage, the stems can be cut as long as 12 inches. Very good keeper and does not bruise easily. Gay and charming, it is a wonderful florist variety. **Each 50c, \$5.00 per dozen.**

**PRIDE OF VICTORIA.** This is cousin to Maggie Mott but is a clear, deep violet color. The large flowers of good substance are carried on very long stems. A vigorous grower, an exuberant bloomer, the unusual color of the flowers, make it one of the loveliest violas that I know. **Each 35c, \$4.00 per dozen.**

**MOSELEY'S PERFECTION.** Large flowers of a deep, clear, bright yellow. A good grower and remarkable bloomer. It is the best yellow that I have seen and contrasts beautifully with the blue, red purple, and violet shades. Stocky plants. Limited stock. **Each 35c, \$3.00 per dozen.**

The varieties Jersey Gem and Wheeler Croft No. 1 are the only ones that bear seed.



WHEELER CROFT WHITE



# GROWING DELPHINIUMS FROM SEED

Delphiniums are easy to grow from seed, one of the easiest among plants. Any one may do it without special trouble, barring a sudden rise in temperature above eighty degrees during germination, or damping off.

Damping off may be due to late afternoon watering which chills the young plants or bursting seeds, to lack of air, very essential to hybrid delphiniums, or to some condition of the soil, though the latter is not a common cause. Dusting the seeds with red copper oxide has been found to be the best preventive for this, and Rootone, also, is recommended.

Temperatures of between fifty and seventy degrees are most favorable for the germination of delphinium seeds.

They may be sown in greenhouse, cold frame, or the open ground, in any month from January to December, depending on your own demands and conditions. But the easiest way is to sow the seeds, as soon as ripe, in the open ground. It is not only the easiest but the plants are more vigorous.

Fill a deep box or make a bed outside of screened leaf mold and clean medium sand, or sand and peat moss, mixed together. Level and water down and next day, sow your seeds, either in rows or broadcast, but thickly, for delphinium seeds germinate much better when thickly sown. Cover, not more than one-eighth inch, with sand. Do not put peat moss over the seeds. It packs over them too much. Water, and stretch over the bed black mosquito netting, to furnish some shade and keep out the birds. Remove this when watering and water only in the mornings, not at night or late afternoon. Keep the seed bed moist but not sopping wet.

In about ten days, they start coming up, and continue for about three weeks. Not all colors nor all seeds germinate at the same time, especially, in the case of mixtures, any more than all hybrid delphiniums bloom at the same time. Some bloom early and some very much later in the season.

Water moderately, keep weeded, and remove netting when the plants have about four leaves. If possible, leave them in the seed bed over winter. In cold climates, a frame may

be built around the bed to keep off the wind, and about an inch of medium sand scattered over it, and they are set for the winter.

In the spring, when the plants have about six leaves, transplant into rows, watering in each plant as you go. Fertilize between the rows with high grade commercial fertilizer, bone meal, or well rotted manure, always remembering that animal fertilizers have been found to promote crown rot, and should not be allowed too close to the crowns. If your ground is heavy, put in plenty of coarse sand, for the most important single requirement of hybrid delphiniums is Good Drainage. They like moisture but never to stand on the crowns. I use a mulch of partly rotted leaves between the rows but peat moss or straw may also be used. Water moderately. Heavy watering gives too much foliage and not enough bloom.

These young plants should grow and bloom in the late summer and fall, bringing you a range of color from the brightest blues, deepest wine colors, violets, blended shades, and the latest pastel pinks. And you may have white like snowflakes.

In the fall, when the blooming is over, cut the spikes to the ground, clear off the old foliage, and put a trowel of fine charcoal and a couple of trowels of sand on the crowns and do not worry about them until spring. If you have slugs, bait for them with a good Meta bait. You might, also, dig raw bone meal in around the plants. This is slow in action but is highly recommended.

You may transplant in the fall or early spring. If in the spring, the best time is when the growth is about four inches along. At this time, if your soil is deficient in lime, it is a good practice to scatter ground oyster shell or ground limestone between the rows. This releases essential elements in the soil and makes fine strong delphiniums.

Do not forget that hybrid delphiniums are native to the cool climates of the world, and if your region is unfavorable, it is best to grow them as annuals or biennials, and start a new crop every year. In the Columbia River Valley, they like light shade; farther north, very little, and farther south, a great deal more.

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## "WHEELER CROFT"

AGNES A. WHEELER • PLANT BREEDER

*Delphiniums • Japanese Iris • Violas*

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